

§ 1267. Inspections and monitoring

(a) Inspections of surface coal mining and reclamation operations

The Secretary shall cause to be made such inspections of any surface coal mining and reclamation operations as are necessary to evaluate the administration of approved State programs, or to develop or enforce any Federal program, and for such purposes authorized representatives of the Secretary shall have a right of entry to, upon, or through any surface coal mining and reclamation operations.

(b) Records and reports; monitoring systems; evaluation of results

For the purpose of developing or assisting in the development, administration, and enforcement of any approved State or Federal program under this chapter or in the administration and enforcement of any permit under this chapter, or of determining whether any person is in violation of any requirement of any such State or Federal program or any other requirement of this chapter—

(1) the regulatory authority shall require any permittee to (A) establish and maintain appropriate records, (B) make monthly reports to the regulatory authority, (C) install, use, and maintain any necessary monitoring equipment or methods, (D) evaluate results in accordance with such methods, at such locations, intervals, and in such manner as a regulatory authority shall prescribe, and (E) provide such other information relative to surface coal mining and reclamation operations as the regulatory authority deems reasonable and necessary;

(2) for those surface coal mining and reclamation operations which remove or disturb strata that serve as aquifers which significantly insure the hydrologic balance of water use either on or off the mining site, the regulatory authority shall specify those—

(A) monitoring sites to record the quantity and quality of surface drainage above and below the minesite as well as in the potential zone of influence;

(B) monitoring sites to record level, amount, and samples of ground water and aquifers potentially affected by the mining and also directly below the lowermost (deepest) coal seam to be mined;

(C) records of well logs and borehole data to be maintained; and

(D) monitoring sites to record precipitation.

The monitoring data collection and analysis required by this section shall be conducted according to standards and procedures set forth by the regulatory authority in order to assure their reliability and validity; and

(3) the authorized representatives of the regulatory authority, without advance notice and upon presentation of appropriate credentials (A) shall have the right of entry to, upon, or through any surface coal mining and reclamation operations or any premises in which any records required to be maintained under paragraph (1) of this subsection are located; and (B) may at reasonable times, and without

delay, have access to and copy any records, inspect any monitoring equipment or method of operation required under this chapter.

(c) Inspection intervals

The inspections by the regulatory authority shall (1) occur on an irregular basis averaging not less than one partial inspection per month and one complete inspection per calendar quarter for the surface coal mining and reclamation operation covered by each permit; (2) occur without prior notice to the permittee or his agents or employees except for necessary onsite meetings with the permittee; and (3) include the filing of inspection reports adequate to enforce the requirements of and to carry out the terms and purposes of this chapter.

(d) Maintenance of sign

Each permittee shall conspicuously maintain at the entrances to the surface coal mining and reclamation operations a clearly visible sign which sets forth the name, business address, and phone number of the permittee and the permit number of the surface coal mining and reclamation operations.

(e) Violations

Each inspector, upon detection of each violation of any requirement of any State or Federal program or of this chapter, shall forthwith inform the operator in writing, and shall report in writing any such violation to the regulatory authority.

(f) Availability of information to public

Copies of any records, reports, inspection materials, or information obtained under this subchapter by the regulatory authority shall be made immediately available to the public at central and sufficient locations in the county, multicounty, and State area of mining so that they are conveniently available to residents in the areas of mining.

(g) Conflict of interest; penalty; publication of regulations; report to Congress

No employee of the State regulatory authority performing any function or duty under this chapter shall have a direct or indirect financial interest in any underground or surface coal mining operation. Whoever knowingly violates the provisions of this subsection shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than \$2,500, or by imprisonment of not more than one year, or by both. The Secretary shall (1) within sixty days after August 3, 1977, publish in the Federal Register, in accordance with section 553 of title 5, regulations to establish methods by which the provisions of this subsection will be monitored and enforced by the Secretary and such State regulatory authority, including appropriate provisions for the filing by such employees and the review of statements and supplements thereto concerning any financial interest which may be affected by this subsection, and (2) report to the Congress as part of the Annual Report (section 1296 of this title) on actions taken and not taken during the preceding year under this subsection.

(h) Review; procedures for inspections

(1) Any person who is or may be adversely affected by a surface mining operation may notify

the Secretary or any representative of the Secretary responsible for conducting the inspection, in writing, of any violation of this chapter which he has reason to believe exists at the surface mining site. The Secretary shall, by regulation, establish procedures for informal review of any refusal by a representative of the Secretary to issue a citation with respect to any such alleged violation. The Secretary shall furnish such persons requesting the review a written statement of the reasons for the Secretary's final disposition of the case.

(2) The Secretary shall also, by regulation, establish procedures to insure that adequate and complete inspections are made. Any such person may notify the Secretary of any failure to make such inspections, after which the Secretary shall determine whether adequate and complete inspections have been made. The Secretary shall furnish such persons a written statement of the reasons for the Secretary's determination that adequate and complete inspections have or have not been conducted.

(Pub. L. 95-87, title V, § 517, Aug. 3, 1977, 91 Stat. 498.)

TERMINATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For termination, effective May 15, 2000, of provisions in subsec. (g) of this section relating to requirement to report to Congress on actions taken and not taken under subsec. (g), see section 3003 of Pub. L. 104-66, as amended, set out as a note under section 1113 of Title 31, Money and Finance, and page 109 of House Document No. 103-7.

§ 1268. Penalties

(a) Civil penalties for violations of permit conditions and provisions of this subchapter

In the enforcement of a Federal program or Federal lands program, or during Federal enforcement pursuant to section 1252 of this title or during Federal enforcement of a State program pursuant to section 1271 of this title, any permittee who violates any permit condition or who violates any other provision of this subchapter, may be assessed a civil penalty by the Secretary, except that if such violation leads to the issuance of a cessation order under section 1271 of this title, the civil penalty shall be assessed. Such penalty shall not exceed \$5,000 for each violation. Each day of continuing violation may be deemed a separate violation for purposes of penalty assessments. In determining the amount of the penalty, consideration shall be given to the permittee's history of previous violations at the particular surface coal mining operation; the seriousness of the violation, including any irreparable harm to the environment and any hazard to the health or safety of the public; whether the permittee was negligent; and the demonstrated good faith of the permittee charged in attempting to achieve rapid compliance after notification of the violation.

(b) Hearing

A civil penalty shall be assessed by the Secretary only after the person charged with a violation described under subsection (a) of this section has been given an opportunity for a public hearing. Where such a public hearing has been held, the Secretary shall make findings of fact,

and he shall issue a written decision as to the occurrence of the violation and the amount of the penalty which is warranted, incorporating, when appropriate, an order therein requiring that the penalty be paid. When appropriate, the Secretary shall consolidate such hearings with other proceedings under section 1271 of this title. Any hearing under this section shall be of record and shall be subject to section 554 of title 5. Where the person charged with such a violation fails to avail himself of the opportunity for a public hearing, a civil penalty shall be assessed by the Secretary after the Secretary has determined that a violation did occur, and the amount of the penalty which is warranted, and has issued an order requiring that the penalty be paid.

(c) Notice of violation; action required of violator; waiver of legal rights

Upon the issuance of a notice or order charging that a violation of this chapter has occurred, the Secretary shall inform the operator within thirty days of the proposed amount of said penalty. The person charged with the penalty shall then have thirty days to pay the proposed penalty in full or, if the person wishes to contest either the amount of the penalty or the fact of the violation, forward the proposed amount to the Secretary for placement in an escrow account. If through administrative or judicial review of the proposed penalty, it is determined that no violation occurred, or that the amount of the penalty should be reduced, the Secretary shall within thirty days remit the appropriate amount to the person, with interest at the rate of 6 percent, or at the prevailing Department of the Treasury rate, whichever is greater. Failure to forward the money to the Secretary within thirty days shall result in a waiver of all legal rights to contest the violation or the amount of the penalty.

(d) Civil action to recover civil penalties

Civil penalties owed under this chapter, may be recovered in a civil action brought by the Attorney General at the request of the Secretary in any appropriate district court of the United States.

(e) Willful violations

Any person who willfully and knowingly violates a condition of a permit issued pursuant to a Federal program, a Federal lands program or Federal enforcement pursuant to section 1252 of this title or during Federal enforcement of a State program pursuant to section 1271 of this title or fails or refuses to comply with any order issued under section 1271 or section 1276 of this title, or any order incorporated in a final decision issued by the Secretary under this chapter, except an order incorporated in a decision issued under subsection (b) of this section or section 1294 of this title, shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000, or by imprisonment for not more than one year or both.

(f) Corporate violations

Whenever a corporate permittee violates a condition of a permit issued pursuant to a Federal program, a Federal lands program or Federal enforcement pursuant to section 1252 of this